

**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**10 December 2014**  
**LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Madam Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council, there has been one meeting of the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council.

**Anti-Social behaviour**

As we know, anti-social behaviour can blight communities and creates a climate of fear for the vulnerable and elderly who feel threatened and in some case trapped, afraid to leave their homes.

Overall, I welcome these changes as they should lead to the introduction of simpler, more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour as well as providing better support for victims and communities.

In essence the changes streamline the tools for tackling anti-social behaviour with six new powers replacing 19 existing ones. The Act also gives landlords powers to deal more swiftly with the most serious anti-social behaviour committed by their tenants.

In addition, the potential to include positive requirements for people subject to ASB sanctions (rather than just focusing on what they are not allowed to do) means that we can start to address the underlying causes of ASB.

### **Garage Colonies**

Members may recall that Cabinet approved a report in November 2012 on Phase 1 of the Garage Sites Review. These sites were those generating low income future liabilities for the Council and/or where occupancy levels were low. The implementation of the recommendations of the Phase 1 report, also demonstrated that there was a high level of interest in acquiring these sites to build housing, which, in turn, has provided with Council with a capital receipt of £240,000.

I was pleased that the Cabinet have now agreed to a second phase covering a further 49 garage sites not considered in Phase 1.

## **Corporate Financial Monitoring Report – Month 6**

Members of the Cabinet received a report which showed that the current projection is for an overspend of £1.459m on the General Fund (compared to £1.710m at Quarter 1).

This represents 1.01% of the net budget and whilst any overspend is a matter of concern I can assure Members that we will continue to monitor and review the situation regularly.

As I have said on numerous occasions previously, and been accused of scaremongering, we are faced with many challenges;

- The number of vulnerable children requiring specialist care packages as result of the “Baby P” case and a greater focus nationally on Child Protection
- Demographic trends which are resulting in an increasingly ageing population
- Income pressures arising from the continued poor state of the economy, e.g. property services income

Clearly with a forecast overspend like this, we need to take decisive action, and the Cabinet agreed a number of “measures” including;

- Freeze on external recruitment (exemptions will apply)
- Internal recruitment will continue to support the redeployment process.
- Relaunch Work Life Balance options around reduced hours / purchase of leave;
- Cease all but essential spend on stationery, office equipment etc.;
- Any spend over £500 to be signed off by Executive Director.

In addition, Executive Directors have also been asked to;

- Review the use of all casual / agency staff / consultants
- Review arrangements for overtime / additional hours
- Review training commitments
- Review spend on IT / Communications

It saddens me to point out that these challenges are only set to get harder following further swingeing funding announcements during the summer – which see us having to find a further £16m of cuts next year and no doubt more beyond that.

## **Mayoral Chains**

Madam Mayor, on other matters I would like to start with the loss of the Mayoral Chains a few weeks ago. This was a serious and disturbing ordeal for all concerned and I want to thank you Madam Mayor, and the Mayoress, deputy Mayor and deputy Mayoress, for the fortitude and courage you all showed by resuming your duties so quickly afterwards. In particular our thoughts are with Jet and his family as he recovers from a broken collar bone and bruising to his hand and arm whilst trying to hang onto the Chains and fending off the cowardly attacker who used a hammer.

Investigations are continuing but I can't say much more about this at this time.

Revised security arrangements are now in place and we have alerted other Districts.

## **Great Town Award**

Madam, Members will be aware that Bury was shortlist for this award and whilst it was a honour for Bury to be shortlisted it wasn't to be on the night as we came second.

However, on the positive side these are exciting times for our Borough. Think of all the town centres across Greater Manchester and note this! Bury have recently been named as the second best town centre shopping destination in Greater Manchester, second only to Manchester City centre, how good is that!

Across the Northwest Bury is ranked as no 9 up from 11<sup>th</sup> last year. And nationally, we are now the 90<sup>th</sup> most significant town centre in the whole of the United Kingdom up from 97<sup>th</sup>.

This hasn't happened by accident, it's down to a lot of determined and visionary people, along with some key Investors having the confidence to buy into the 'Bury Vision' and of course the wonderful shoppers and visitors who keep coming back.

Increasingly Bury is seen as a place to do business. In September Bury saw the highest increase in Greater Manchester for new businesses formations. This is more fantastic news.

### **Radcliffe Market**

Madam Mayor, further proof that this borough is thriving came last Saturday when I had the pleasure and the privilege to open the refurbished market hall in Radcliffe. The building looks fantastic and it is just the start of the regeneration of Radcliffe town centre. To those who doubted and said 'I'll believe it when I see it' I would just say...go and see it and spend some money!!

### **Radcliffe Town Team**

As Members know the regeneration of Radcliffe Town Centre is well underway with the launch of the refurbished market and plans for a new Bus Terminal. To support these and future initiatives I was pleased to support the creation of a Radcliffe Town Team which is led by local traders and supported by Council Officers to look at way in building on these significant investments.

The team will be looking at signage, marketing and further infrastructure changes to build up brand Radcliffe.

## **Food Banks**

Madam Mayor, as we approach Christmas and as we read about events such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, where billions are spent on gifts on our loved ones, I want to speak about Food Banks.

I know the Members opposite are in denial about such initiatives but the reality is that its becoming increasingly the case that more and more people many of which are the working poor are trapped in poverty and having to rely more and more on Food Banks.

I want to praise the efforts of the Bury Food Poverty Group which includes voluntary groups such as PorchBox, Rough Sleepers, CAB to name but a few. The Council plays its part in providing locations across the Borough for the collection of food parcels and rent free space to PorchBox at Bradley Fold .

Up to September this year a total of just over 3000 food parcels have been issued which is double for the total of the whole of 2013.



## **Recycling**

Madam Mayor, as we gear up for the Christmas Waste Collections, I am pleased to advise Members of the significant improvement in our household collected bin waste recycling rate which has improved by 8% from approx 47% to nearly 55% in October.

During the run up to the launch of the new service on the 6 October and since i.e. from July, since the proposal to move to 3 weekly collections went public: We have issued:

- 1680 New Blue Bins
- 3570 New Brown Bins
- 4115 kitchen caddies
- Replaced 1480 140 litre with 240litre for those who had previously downsized out a a total of approx 5,000

We have also undertaken 370 waste audits at households where residents had concerns about the new service.

Food Caddy liners are now available in most of our public building for collection.

## **Adoption**

Madam Mayor I am pleased to report The Adoption Service has had a remarkably successful year in respect of recruiting prospective adopters and matching children with adoptive parents in much reduced timescales. 16 sets of adopters will have been approved by the end of the year and a further 12 are in the process of being assessed; enquiries to the team have gone up by 50% during the period April – In November this year compared with the same time last year, with a record 138 people making inquiries.

Since April the service has matched 25 children with adopters – more than in the whole of 2013/14. We continue to provide placements for other Local Authorities in the region and this offsets the cost of buying external placements for our children.

The work of the service was recently recognised by The British Agency for Adoption & Fostering at a prestigious national event in October, when the Team were presented with an award by the Children's Minister, Edward Timpson, as runners up in the Adoption Team of the Year'

## **Clarence Park**

I was delighted recently to have officially opened 'The Green' at Clarence Park in November. This is a flagship facility which has seen a bowling pavilion be refreshed and renewed to allow it to continue to be used by bowling teams, but to also extend its use as a day service base for people with learning disabilities and a community cafe and venue.

## **Elmhurst**

I am also pleased to be officially opening the newly refurbished Elmhurst site on 17 December 2014. The facility boasts hotel style accommodation for short stay customers and has maximised the potential of the existing building to provide enhanced services in a significantly improved environment. It is forward thinking in terms of its approach to energy efficiency and interior design and again is a flagship service for the future.

## **North West in Bloom**

Since the last Council the results of this years North West in Bloom awards have been announced. I am both pleased and proud to announce that Bury has won the large town category for the 11<sup>th</sup> year running and Radcliffe has won Gold award for the 4<sup>th</sup> year running. A community led entry by Ramsbottom Incredible Edible group achieved a silver guilt award for Ramsbottom in the first year of entry.

In addition to these achievements Bury also achieved a discretionary Environmental Quality Award for Bury's recycling initiative as well as being nominated to represent the region in the Britain in Bloom finals in 2015.

## **Note**

Martin Dowding also received an outstanding contribution award but I expect he would not wish to be singled out for a mention from the workforce.

## **Volunteering**

We talk a lot about the Community Spirit and its importance to the well being of our residents. We see right across the Borough good work going on day in day and day out and in particular to those groups who organise and deliver such wonderful festivals; carnivals and fairs.

I want to publically thank all our volunteers for the work they do unselfishly to help others not so fortunate or to put on events for all residents to enjoy such as the Bury, Prestwich and Radcliffe Carnivals and Christmas Fairs. Thank you one and all.

Finally I'd like to wish all Members, staff and residents a very happy holidays. We've had a very good year and whilst 2015 will bring with it a great number of challenges I see it as a year of opportunities and so I also wish you all a happy and peaceful new year.

**Madam Mayor, that concludes my statement. End**